

cybersecurity measures and ballot curing, discrediting arguments that expanding access to the vote enables election fraud. In fact, Vermont has been on the forefront of election security, identifying threats that have ultimately led to the strengthening of systems nationwide.

In addition to defending democracy through sound election administration, Jim has prioritized good government while secretary of state. For example, he and his team oversaw the transition from a paper system to an electronic system, posting more records and information online. While this received fewer headlines than the office's election work, it has been critical to ensuring transparency and public access. Similarly, Jim's work to reduce red tape in the office of professional regulation means that Vermont businesses and professionals are better served, while still protecting the public.

At a time when democracy is under threat and distrust in government is pervasive, Jim has given Vermonters faith and hope for the future. He has shown what accessible elections and good government can and should look like, and for that, he has my sincere gratitude. Vermont is indeed a better place and Vermonters are better off thanks to Secretary of State Jim Condos. I wish Jim and Annie all the best for his well-deserved retirement. ●

TRIBUTE TO BETH PEARCE

● Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I rise today to honor Beth Pearce of Barre, VT. Beth is retiring as Vermont State Treasurer after more than 45 years in public service, including nearly two decades serving Vermonters.

Beth was born in West Springfield, MA, and grew up in a civically and politically engaged household. After serving in a variety of government positions throughout the Northeast, Beth became Vermont's deputy State treasurer in 2003. In 2011, she was appointed Vermont State Treasurer and, despite being new to electoral politics, she was elected in own right in 2012, and was re-elected to four additional terms.

Despite her electoral success, Beth has long considered herself more of a policy person than a politician, something that is evident in her approach in the State treasurer's office. She has taken her role as a public servant seriously and has been a careful steward of public funds. Though this has sometimes put her at the center of challenging issues, Beth's integrity has earned her widespread respect.

As Beth herself has described, her office's work "is not just numbers on spreadsheets, but a reflection of [their] commitment of service to, and respect for, everyone in Vermont." This approach is just one of the things that sets Beth apart. While she has relished the day-to-day work and embraced being described as "breathtakingly boring," Beth has never lost sight of the immense responsibility of the

State treasurer's office to positively impact the lives of everyday Vermonters. Whether by making sure that individuals and towns received the aid they were entitled to following the devastation caused by Tropical Storm Irene, that people with disabilities could save and invest through the VermontABLE program, or that State employees could retire with dignity, Beth has never forgotten that it is people—not numbers—at the center of her work.

To my mind, Beth represents the best of public service. She will long be remembered by all who worked with her for her competence, empathy, humor, and, of course, her unwavering love of the Boston Red Sox. And to all those Vermonters who would not otherwise know the role of the treasurer's office, she will be remembered for her tireless work toward a Vermont where everyone has the opportunity for a lifetime of financial stability and well-being. Vermont is indeed a better place, and Vermonters are better off, thanks to Beth Pearce. I join Beth's friends, family, and fellow Vermonters in wishing her all the best in her well-deserved retirement. ●

REMEMBERING WILL RAAP

● Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I rise today to honor the Will Raap, one of Vermont's most visionary leaders, who passed away on December 12.

Will was born in Fremont, CA, and spent time in Findhorn, Scotland, where he met his future wife Lynette. Will and Lynette married in 1977 and, in 1981, moved to Vermont so Will could continue his work with the Garden Way Company and Gardens for All. Two years later, Will cofounded Gardener's Supply Company to enable everyone to experience the benefits that come from gardens and gardening, including people with disabilities, seniors, and beginning gardeners.

From the earliest days of the company, Will's business model was built around the "triple bottom line" of people, planet, and profits. A clear example of his commitment to the people that made up Gardener's Supply happened in these early years, when Will gave himself a pay cut in order to give a valued data entry employee a raise. It was also in these early years of Gardener's Supply that Will began transitioning the company into an employee-ownership structure. This move was rooted in his belief that everyone doing the work should share in the benefit, not just those at the top. Will's investments in his employees, both on the individual level and on the whole, have proven powerful and successful. In 2009, Gardener's Supply reached 100-percent employee ownership, and that young data entry employee, Cindy Turcot, is now president and CEO of Gardener's Supply and has become a national leader of employee ownership.

Never short of energy, ideas, or vision, in 1987 Will brought his passion

for improving community, agriculture, and the environment to an aging dairy farm and an unofficial landfill in the heart of Vermont's largest city of Burlington. As mayor of Burlington at this time, I was glad to work with Will on this important effort. During this time, Will came to us in city government to request a \$7,000 loan to buy a tractor and start a municipal yard and food waste composting project managed by Gardener's Supply employees. To get this much-needed project off the ground, Will and volunteers cleaned up the neglected piece of land and turned it into what is now known as the Intervale Center. Today, the Intervale is national model for urban agriculture, food access, and local food system development and successful partnerships between for-profit and non-profit organizations. It is also a great recreational resource for the Old North End and the entire greater Burlington area. It is home to Vermont's largest community supported agriculture—CSA—farm, a tree nursery, a food hub and distribution center, community gardens, hiking trails, event spaces, and a number of established farm enterprises.

Will was also a driving force behind Vermont's innovative Farm-to-Plate initiative, as well as the Vermont Dairy/Water Quality Collaborative. Most recently, Will worked to turn an iconic failed dairy farm in Charlotte, VT, into an entirely new way to think about agriculture in our State. Using the farm's land and facilities, Will created Earthkeep Farmcommon and the Earthkeep Farmers Collective. Today, the former dairy farm is being used by young entrepreneurs to grow and malt grains, raise shrimp, grow berries, make carbonated beverages, and produce baked goods, to name just a few of the businesses in operation there.

Will's lifetime of accomplishments reflected his style of thinking big and his ability to surround himself with teams that were eager to make those big ideas a reality. Will Raap represents the best of Vermont's entrepreneurial spirit. There is no doubt that Will will be remembered as a force for good and a leader whose lasting mark on Vermont will be not about himself, but about all those whose lives have been made better for his vision.

All Vermonters can honor Will's memory by asking his three favorite questions: "What's next?" "How can we make a difference?" and, "Are we doing enough?" Vermont is a better place and Vermonters are better off thanks to Will Raap's many contributions. ●

TRIBUTE TO JAMES W. RANE

● Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, I am pleased to speak today about the profound impact of Mr. James W. Rane, a fellow Alabamian with many contributions to our great country and my home State of Alabama.

Jimmy has had an impressive career as a renowned businessman. Jimmy is